

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, and the rejection of claims 1-25 are respectfully requested. Applicants have attempted to address every objection and ground for rejection in the Office Action dated September 22, 2005 (Paper No. 092005) and believe the application is now in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal. The claims have been amended to more clearly describe the present invention.

Claims 2, 3, 7, 8 and 16-25 have been canceled. The remaining claims 1 and 14 relate to individual stands for use in combination with an adjacent, complementary stand. Amended claim 1 recites one type of stand for use in the combination, and amended claim 14 recites the other type of stand for use in the combination. Amended claim 9 recites a combination of such stands, one of each type.

Claims 1, 3-5, 8, 14, 15, 17 and 19-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,137,260 to Wung. Claims 3, 8, 17 and 19-21 are canceled, rendering those rejections moot. Wung discloses a plurality of recharging modules or pods which are electrically and mechanically connected to each other by separate coupling units 56. The modules are not connected to each other, but to the coupling unit. Each module has the same receptacle connection formation 34, 36 along one side. Not only are the recited interlocking means distinguishable in the presently amended claims, but the connection formations of Wung are not located where the adjacent modules contact each other as recited in claims 1 and 14.

In contrast, amended claim 1 recites, among other things, the means for supporting includes a base having at least one side edge having a lateral detent configured

for engaging a complementary lateral detent of the other stand, and the means for interlocking includes at least one hole disposed in the detent constructed and arranged for receiving a corresponding tab of the adjacent stand.

Claim 14 as amended, recites, among other things, the means for supporting the appliance for storage includes a base having at least one side edge having a lateral detent configured for engaging the complementary lateral detent of the other stand and means for interlocking the stand with another stand, the means for interlocking including at least one tab disposed on the base for depending from the edge and configured for engaging a corresponding one of the holes in the detent on the other interlocking stand.

In view of the lack, in Wung, of the structure recited in claims 1, 9 and 14 as amended, the rejection based thereon is respectfully traversed.

Claims 9, 13, 22 and 24 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Roberts (US 5,900,715). Claims 22 and 24 are canceled, rendering those rejections moot. In Roberts, each module is connected to a power strip, not to each other. Also, all of the modules have identical connection formations, in contrast with the present invention of claim 9, reciting first and second stand types of stands or modules as now recited.

More specifically, claim 9 as amended recites, among other things, that the at least two stands include a first stand type with a first means for interlocking and a second stand type with a second means for interlocking different from but engageable with the first means for interlocking; the means for interlocking is disposed on two sides of each stand, and the means for interlocking is the same on both sides of the first and

second stand types. In view of the lack, in Roberts of this structure, the rejection based thereon is respectfully traversed.

Claims 2, 6, 7, 10-12, 16, 18, 23 and 25 rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious in view of Wung or Roberts. Claims 7, 16, 23 and 25 have been canceled, rendering those rejections moot. The arguments asserted above traversing Wung and Roberts are reasserted here. Among other arguments, Wung fails to disclose stands or modules connected to each other, only connected to a special connector piece 56. Also, Roberts' modules are speaker units, and are incapable of being appliance stands, since they are the appliances themselves, and are also not configured for being attached to each other. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's assertion on the obviousness of using tabs in this context, since there is no suggestion or incentive in either reference for connection of the two types of stands as now recited in independent claims 1, 9 and 14, from which the rejected claims depend. Accordingly, the obviousness rejection based on Wung or Roberts is respectfully traversed.

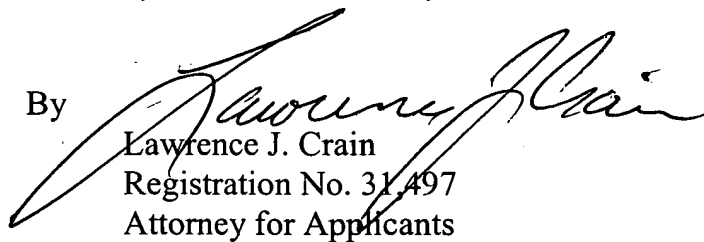
Applicants submit that in view of the above-identified amendments and remarks, the claims in their present form are patentably distinct over the art of record. Allowance of the rejected claims is respectfully requested. Alternatively, the claims are submitted to be in better form for appeal. Should the Examiner discover there are

remaining issues which may be resolved by a telephone interview, he is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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